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Subject: EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines - Monday, March 25, 2019

EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Monday, March 25, 2019

*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

Seismic surveying proposal in Atlantic raises Bay concerns

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL Groups say 250-decibel blasts – 10 seconds apart for months at a time – would have a detrimental effect on whales, other marine life. The Atlantic Ocean is staring down the barrel of an air gun, and its blast could reverberate into the Chesapeake Bay. Despite outcry from coastal communities and most East Coast states, the Trump administration is moving forward with allowing five companies to perform seismic surveys offshore from Delaware Bay to central Florida. Environmental groups and many marine scientists fear that the tests' loud, repeated blasts, which are used to detect oil and gas deposits deep beneath the ocean floor, could upend an underwater ecosystem that relies on sound for communication. "The ocean is an acoustic world," said Michael Jasny, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's marine mammal protection program. "Whales, fish and many other species depend on sound to survive. The extensive blasting that the Trump administration has authorized would undermine marine life on an enormous scale." ... Nine state attorneys general quickly moved to throw their legal weight behind the environmental groups' lawsuit aimed at stopping the surveys before they start. The intervening states include four in the Bay watershed: Delaware, Maryland, New York and Virginia. The suit argues that the National Marine Fisheries Service violated several laws, including the Endangered Species Act, when it issued the permits. Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh said he decided to intervene because the tests could lead to drilling off the state's coast, which he sees as a potential disaster-in-waiting for its \$116 million seafood industry and \$2.6 billion ocean-based tourism industry. "Most of the water in the Bay comes from the ocean. It doesn't flush quickly. Even the normal kinds of spillage that is attendant to offshore drilling could have serious adverse consequences for the Bay," he said...

Study Shows Many Virginia Communities Suffer from Poor Air Quality

VIRGINIA PUBLIC RADIO Virginia's air quality has been a topic of debate in recent years, as environmentalists have clashed with business interests. Meanwhile, the quality of Virginia's air has suffered according to a new report. Virginia's air quality isn't good. In fact, it's below the national average. That's according to a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction breakdown from the County Health Rankings, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin. They show that Virginia has more fine particulate matter in the air than the rest of the country. "Break down the data and think about what's going on seasonally perhaps daily just to see what's going on and think about what are the drivers affecting your community," suggests Aliana Havrilla, an action learning coach with the collaboration. The numbers show that some areas have air quality that's way below the national average. Places like Scott County, Pittsylvania and Danville have the worst air quality. Kate Addleson at the Sierra Club of Virginia says these places are probably suffering from a combination of factors. "It very well may be there is a combination of road traffic as well as coal mining related practices as well as stationary sources like power plants." [Click here to review the data from County Health Rankings](#) She says the best things Virginia can do to clean up the air is limit sources of emissions from power plants and reduce the number of automobiles on the roads.

Commentary: Legislature right to wait on EPA water standards

CHARLESTON GAZETTE-MAIL I have represented local governments in the public water supply business across West Virginia and the country for almost 30 years. My clients spend your money to provide safe and affordable public drinking water. We are not in the business of avoiding necessary and appropriate requirements. Instead, we embrace them and simply charge you more so that we can comply. That said, the West Virginia Legislature was absolutely right to defer adoption of the EPA's 2015 updated human health criteria. Some of those criteria would be significantly lower while limits for other criteria would be significantly increased. My clients objected to their adoption (both higher and lower) because the roller coaster increases and decreases in the criteria resulted primarily from the EPA revising multiple margins of safety on top of already very stringent criteria. That is not good science. Such arbitrary margins of safety go beyond any real risk any West Virginian faces. The criteria are so unnecessarily stringent and based upon such unlikely circumstances (a West Virginian drinking 2.4 liters of untreated river water a day for 70 years and that river water contains the full level of a pollutant) that my clients could not in good conscience impose costs on you and the businesses that we serve to meet the new criteria. Beyond the multiple margins of safety included on top of the already stringent criteria there are further margins of safety in how these criteria are implemented. For example, wastewater utilities are assumed to discharge at maximum flows and pollutant concentrations while the receiving streams are assumed to be at drought conditions. Of course, those conditions are mutually exclusive. The controversy over the criteria is much ado about nothing. West Virginians have far greater issues and risks to be addressed than would ever be addressed by these criteria...

More than 22 million gallons of sewage-tainted water flow into Jones Falls, Herring Run, officials say

BALTIMORE SUN (Saturday) At least 22.6 million gallons of sewage-tainted water overflowed into the Jones Falls and Herring Run after heavy rains this past week, according to the Baltimore Department of Public Works. The overflows between Thursday night and Friday morning were reported from multiple locations, the agency said. Overflows can occur when stormwater infiltrates crack and breaks in sewer pipes. People should avoid contact with the stream waters to avoid contamination, the agency said. The public works department recently temporarily stopped issuing news releases on sewage overflows, saying a new live map had replaced the alerts. But after questions from The Baltimore Sun about the change in practice, the agency said it would issue alerts for overflows of 10,000 gallons or more.

State Department of Health investigating potential cancer cluster in Washington County

WASHINGTON (Pa.) OBSERVER-REPORTER The Pennsylvania Department of Health is looking into a possible cluster of cancer cases in Washington County. In the past 10 years, four people within Canon-McMillan School District have been diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called Ewing's sarcoma. Each year, fewer than 200 cases of Ewing's sarcoma are diagnosed in the United States. Nate Wardle, press secretary for the Department of Health, said the department is reviewing cancer statistics for Washington County and Canon-McMillan School District. The Department of Health is using data from the Pennsylvania cancer registry to review cancer incidence in Washington County and Canon-McMillan and, using a protocol the department has in place, will determine if the number of cancer cases in the area is elevated compared to incidences for the same type of cancer in the rest of the state. Wardle said the department has received calls from members of the community who are worried about cancer risks to children in the area. Residents want to know if the cancer is coincidental or due to other factors, such as environmental issues. "We are looking into all cancers, which specifically includes radiation-type cancers by type, childhood cancer and the Ewing's family of sarcomas in Washington County and the Canon-McMillan School District," Wardle wrote in an email. "Some of those who contacted us mentioned historic radiation sources in the area, and this prompted us to analyze the radiation-related cancers, in addition to the Ewing's family and childhood cancer in general." Canonsburg was home to Standard Chemical Co., which operated the site as a radium extraction plant from 1911 to 1922, and later Vitro Corp. of America, processed ore to extract radium and uranium salts until 1957. More than 200,000 dry tons of uranium mill tailings and other contaminated materials were buried in a clay-lined encapsulation cell...

Water Quality Worries Paden City Residents

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER (Saturday) PADEN CITY — Sometimes in past years, water from faucets in Jon Stillwagner's home in Paden City flowed brown. "It looked like someone had chronic diarrhea and left," said Stillwagner, a 69-year-old lifelong resident of the town. "We've all had brown water at different stages in town." Today, though, he's concerned about water in Paden City for a different, less visible reason: the excess presence of the chemical tetrachloroethylene in the town's drinking water supply. "What we want is for our water to be cleaned," Stillwagner said. "We're bathing with it. We're cooking with it. We've been drinking it." Paden City officials announced March 4 that the chemical, also called perchloroethylene or PCE, had a concentration of 5.5 parts per billion in the city's drinking water supply. The maximum allowable contaminant level for the chemical set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is 5.0 ppb. Residents said they learned about the contamination through a letter from the city they received in the mail. Several expressed concern and confusion over whether the chemical might have an impact on their health. Mayor Clyde Hochstrasser, meanwhile, said the city is searching for solutions and that the contamination is not at a dangerous level. "The city is working to secure financing for the equipment we need to control the contamination," Hochstrasser said. "We are also working on a temporary fix at this time. We will let residents know when we know more." The city, with a population of about 2,400, found contamination at one of its four wells about six months ago, which it then shut down. Two other wells recently began showing PCE contamination, Hochstrasser said... Moving forward, the EPA taking the lead on investigation and remediation. The agency is taking water samples in Paden City to study the flow of water from the dry cleaners' site to contaminated wells, spokesman Roy Seneca said. Solutions from the EPA and DEP to remove the contamination could include installing extraction wells or removing contaminated soil, Seneca said. In addition, the city is looking for funding to upgrade the aeration equipment its uses to reduce the presence of chemicals.

Environmental groups glad about coal ash cleanup law

WILLIAMSBURG VIRGINIA-GAZETTE (Friday) RICHMOND — Environmental and consumer groups applauded Gov. Ralph Northam after he signed legislation this week that aims to protect water quality by cleaning up more than 27 million cubic yards of coal ash from unlined ponds in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Northam signed into law SB 1355, sponsored by Sen. Frank Wagner, R-Virginia Beach, and HB 2786, sponsored by Del. Riley Ingram, R-Hopewell. The legislation seeks to clean up coal ash sites in the city of Chesapeake and in Prince William, Chesterfield and Fluvanna counties. The ash is the byproduct of coal-fired power plants operated by Dominion Energy. The law will require Dominion to move the coal ash to lined landfills or recycling it in a safe manner. It will also require the closure and removal of any coal combustion residuals units, including coal ash ponds or landfills, within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. "The potential risks to public health and water quality posed by unlined coal ash ponds in the commonwealth are far too great for us to continue with business as usual," Northam said. "This historic, bipartisan effort sets a standard for what we can achieve when we work together, across party lines, in the best interest of all Virginians. I am proud to sign this legislation into law." Ingram echoed those sentiments. "I was pleased to see that the General Assembly, the governor, House, Senate and Dominion were able to all come together and come up with a great solution for the coal ash ponds and in my opinion for the betterment of everyone," Ingram said. The bills were co-sponsored by several lawmakers, including Sen. Scott Surovell, D-Fairfax, and Del. Jennifer Carroll Foy, D-Prince William. They contributed key components, including a ban on "cap in place" closure of unlined ponds — a method critics said could lead to water pollution. Another component is a requirement that at least 25 percent of the coal ash be recycled for concrete or other beneficial uses. "I think this represents the first time Virginia has adopted environmental regulations that are more protective of the environment than federal law," Surovell said. "This represents an important step forward for environmental protections in Virginia." ...

Lawmakers seek to protect funding for Chesapeake Bay restoration

WAVY-TV HAMPTON ROADS (Friday) WASHINGTON, D.C. — Federal lawmakers are making a push to prevent major cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay restoration program. President Donald Trump's 2020 budget proposal threatens to cut the program's funding by 90 percent, which legislators and environmental advocates say would threaten recent progress to improve the bay's health. "We're seeing improvements," Dr. Alison Prost said of the bay. "The dead zone's getting smaller, the bay grasses are coming back." Prost, the executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, says years of work could be put at risk if the proposed

cuts take effect. "Devastating to the communities working hard," she added. "You have regulatory rollbacks to programs - fundamental clean water act programs - that help with the bay's recovery, that help with the clean air." This is not the first time Trump has sought to cut the program's funding. Congress has stepped in and restored it for the past couple of years. Funding for the bay program was \$73 million this fiscal year but the administration's proposed cuts would water that down to just \$7.3 million. "It could be catastrophic not having the federal government as part of this," Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Maryland, said. Cardin and Congressman Jamie Raskin, D-Maryland, said that while the bay's health is improving, the work is far from finished. "We're talking about the largest estuary in North America," Raskin said. "It's the lifeblood of our state." Some lawmakers are encouraged that Congress won't allow the budget cuts. They say the bay has always received support from both parties. "It's iconic in Maryland, and it's a national treasure," Cardin added. However, the Trump administration says the federal government needs to spend its money elsewhere. "There's many different regional environmental programs that we're encouraging states and localities to pick up the costs for," acting White House Budget Director Russ Vought explained. Vought said that Maryland and Virginia benefit most from the bay, so the states should foot the bill to keep it clean.

Relocations, Buyouts Tucked Into Trump's Budget

GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE In a surprise move, the White House, in its latest budget blueprint, proposed most major agencies grow their workforces. The suggested staffing increases marked a dramatic shift after President Trump in his first two budgets called on agencies across government slash their rolls. The increases were not across the board, however. Some agencies will still have to make downward adjustments. In those cases, the administration budgeted for buyout payments, relocation incentives and other workforce reshaping initiatives... The **Environmental Protection Agency** once again requested funds for "workforce reshaping," asking for \$31 million as part of its effort to slash 15 percent of its workforce. Congress provided no money for such efforts in fiscal years 2018 and 2019, though the agency did offer buyouts and early retirements in 2017. EPA said it would again offer those incentives in 2020, as well as relocation offers. "To help achieve its mission, EPA will develop, review and analyze mission requirements and implement options to effectively align and redistribute the agency's workforce based on program priorities, resource reallocation, and technological advances," it wrote in its budget proposal. "Effective workforce reshaping is critical to EPA's ability to accomplish its mission. EPA will be examining our statutory functions and processes to eliminate inefficiencies and streamline our processes."...

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Pipeline project could foul up girls softball season in Chester County With opening day just two weeks away, little girls in hooded sweatshirts and muddy cleats bounced around infields throughout West Whiteland Township Saturday at their first softball practice. But officials with the Exton Little League fear Sunoco's accelerated plans for construction of the Mariner East 2 pipeline may end the season before it begins. "It just couldn't come at a worse time," said Greg Pfeifer, the league's vice president for softball. The Exton Little League has known that the controversial pipeline could impact its fields at Meadowbrook Manor Park, a sliver of green space on Swedesford Road beside the Exton Square Mall. The league has been in discussions with Sunoco and Percheron, its contractor, for years, said Dave Stevenson, the league's president. Stevenson said he'd been assured the work would not disrupt a season on the fields, which the league leases from the Meadowbrook Manor Homeowners Association...

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Meeting set on proposed shale gas well at U.S. Steel mill in Mon Valley

The state Department of Environmental Protection will hold a public meeting this week on a controversial proposal that eventually could result in a half-dozen Marcellus Shale gas wells being drilled and fracked on U.S. Steel Corp.'s Edgar Thomson steel mill site in the Monongahela Valley. Lauren Fraley, spokeswoman for DEP's southwest district, said in an email response to questions that the department has received approximately two dozen letters or postcards expressing opposition to the proposed project. At the meeting, scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, DEP will present information and answer questions about the proposal to build the well pad and drill an initial shale gas well between

Braddock Avenue and Turtle Creek, straddling the North Versailles-East Pittsburgh border. The meeting will be held at the Braddock Volunteer Fire Department No. 2 Social Hall, 845 Talbot Ave., Braddock. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. The well-drilling operation, which could include as many as five additional wells, was proposed by Merriam Oil & Gas Corp., which has leased the land from U.S. Steel. New Mexico-based Merriam previously has said the well would be drilled vertically about 6,000 feet below the surface and then have extended laterals of 8,500 to 10,000 feet horizontally. The company, which is invited to Wednesday's meeting, did not return phone calls seeking comment Friday. The shale gas well would be the first "unconventional" horizontal shale well drilled by the company, and...

Pittsburgh Water Authority Working To Better Document Water Main Replacements The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority is pushing forward in its quest to move into a digital present — and future. During a monthly meeting Friday Downtown, members of the water authority's board approved contracts for small water main replacements, and extended a contract with SpryPoint Services that would now allow employees working on water main breaks to upload photos to an app, more easily documenting their work and progress replacing service lines. "The ultimate goal is to spot trends," said Will Pickering, spokesperson for PWSA. "We want to get as much data as we can about assets, pipes and sewer lines so we can respond proactively." PWSA in 2018 began allowing plumbers to enter their work digitally and document it, when documentation was previously handled by paper. Mr. Pickering said things went so well, the authority will now allow technicians in the field to use the services and better monitor the replacing of water mains...

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA (NPR)

Gov. Wolf highlights Philly school conditions in severance tax push Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf visited a school in South Philadelphia Thursday to stump for his severance tax proposal. The location was strategic, giving Wolf a chance to highlight the kind of infrastructure projects he'd like to complete with the \$4.5 billion his administration says the tax would produce. Unlike past years, Wolf proposed the tax as a separate item from the general budget. He wants the revenue earmarked for an initiative called "Restore Pennsylvania," which would address things such as flooding, broadband access, public transit, and, as emphasized Thursday, school repair. By separating the money this way, Wolf said he hopes to alleviate fears that the money would disappear into the state's general fund. "This is for specific capital projects to address the real needs of Pennsylvanians," Wolf said Thursday. The governor appeared alongside other officials at John H. Taggart School in South Philadelphia. The state and city set aside a combined \$15 million last year to remove lead paint at Taggart and 29 other public schools in Philadelphia. That emergency money came after a series of articles in The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News highlighted dangerous conditions in the city's aging schools. By the district's own account, it would take \$4.5 billion to bring all of its buildings up to code...

PENNSYLVANIA CAPITAL-STAR

Natural gas industry consultant to 'debunk' climate change consensus in House testimony A Pittsburgh geologist who consults for the natural gas industry, published a book casting aspersions on the scientific consensus around climate change, and who serves on a board for a climate denialist think tank will speak to members of a House committee Wednesday. Environmental Resources & Energy Committee Chair Daryl Metcalfe invited Gregory Wrightstone to "present his research on climate science and factually debunking some of the modern myths surrounding the 'climate change' discussion," according to a hearing notice. Wrightstone's testimony was first noted by The PLS Reporter. Metcalfe, R-Butler, did not reply to a request for comment. But in a Facebook post last week, he attacked Auditor General Eugene DePasquale for holding public meetings on climate change. "He is another liberal democrat holding up the shiny object of 'climate change' as a distraction in an attempt to help his leftist accomplices pick the taxpayers' pockets!," Metcalfe said on Facebook...

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

Along the Susquehanna, Three Mile Island's towers remain a constant reminder of the 1979 disaster Three Mile Island's cooling towers stood like ivory rooks, silhouetted against the drab gray of February on a recent afternoon in Dauphin County. The towers were airbrushed on the doors of Londonderry Township's firetrucks, a hopeful image, with all four billowing plumes into the sky above the Susquehanna River. The towers haven't looked that way since March 28, 1979, though, when one of the nuclear plant's reactors suffered a partial meltdown, and families scrambled into their cars and fled or hid inside with their drapes closed. "I can see the cooling towers from the upstairs window of my house," resident John Ziats said. "When I look back on it, it was a time in my life that you're just living your life and going about your business and something you have no control over happened, and as it progressed, it got scarier and scarier." The

partial meltdown at TMI occurred at 4 a.m. that day 40 years ago. Bob Hauser was at work in Harrisburg and didn't recall "a big hubbub" being made about the incident. At the time, he didn't have a radio in his car...

Op-Ed: Recycling Is Dying, So What's Next For Our Trash?

ALTOONA MIRROR

Watershed Cleanup Set For April 20 In Centre County In celebration of Earth Day Weekend, the public can participate in the 23rd annual Watershed Cleanup Day from 8 a.m. to noon April 20. Volunteers will visit sites throughout Centre County's watersheds to clean up trash and litter and can then celebrate at a picnic at Circleville Park in State College. Since 1997, Watershed Cleanup Day volunteers have removed more than 6 million pounds of waste from streams, roadways, sinkholes and illegal dumpsites, according to a press release. Last year, more than 600 volunteers helped remove about 35,460 pounds of trash from Centre County. To join the 2019 Cleanup Day, visit www.clearwaterconservancy.org/wcd. Volunteers can suggest a cleanup site or be assigned to a site. All materials including gloves, bags and safety vests will be provided. The Watershed Cleanup Day is led by ClearWater Conservancy in partnership with Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority and local partners...

ERIE TIMES NEWS

Trees Being Removed In Erie Park Will Be Replaced Trees being taken down along the Bayfront Parkway in Frontier Park will be replaced this fall. About 25 aging pine, maple and locust trees have grown toward electric utility lines and are being removed, said Vernon Peterson, executive director of the Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier. The power lines serve hundreds of Penelec customers in Frontier and west Bayfront neighborhoods. Several of the trees died from contact with the power lines. Many have Diplodia, a tree fungus that attacks older and weakened trees. Some additionally are infested with insects, Peterson said. The trees are being removed by Penelec. A special logging truck with a grapple hook that can easily remove large sections of wood will be used to prepare the park for new trees to be planted. Fall is the best time for planting, Peterson said...

WITF HARRISBURG'S NPR STATION

The Three Mile Island accident and the enduring questions of ties to cancer and deaths Harrisburg -- In the early hours after the accident at Three Mile Island, officials urged residents to stay inside their homes - to keep windows closed. Everything was under control. The public was in no danger, they said. As officials gained a clearer understanding of the magnitude of the situation churning at the core of one of the reactors at Three Mile Island, a tide of panic swept the region. Expectant mothers and young children were ordered to evacuate, families fled, turning parts of the midstate into ghost towns as the Unit 2 reactor, which had been in operation a little more than a year, cast a specter of catastrophe over the region. The story of the March 28, 1979 Three Mile Island partial meltdown has undergone revisions over the years amid advancing scientific assessments. In time, nuclear engineers equipped with state-of-the-art robotics would learn that a substantial portion of the Unit 2 core - 50 percent in fact - had been destroyed during the partial meltdown. Ionized radiation had been released to the atmosphere and tons of radioactive uranium had been compromised. But in the 40 years since the nation's worst nuclear disaster, the edict delivered by the federal government and the nuclear industry has remained unchanged. Officials say the amount of radiation released into the atmosphere as a result of the partial meltdown was well within accepted levels - far less than delivered by an x-ray...

If Three Mile Island shuts down, counties could lose grant money Harrisburg -- If Three Mile Island shuts down, the counties and communities surrounding the plant could see less money for emergency management. When other nuclear plants have closed, the operators have typically been given permission from the federal government to discontinue the 10-mile emergency planning zones. The counties and municipalities in those 10-mile zones receive money for emergency management purposes, including drills and educational materials. Exelon Corp., which owns and operates Three Mile Island's Unit 1, has said it intends to shut the plant down this year. Lawmakers are working on remedies to keep the plant operating. "Without a policy solution, the ripple effect of the early retirement of Three Mile Island Unit 1 will be felt throughout the community," Exelon said in a statement. "Several county and state emergency management positions will no longer be funded by Exelon Generation when TMI is decommissioned," Exelon said...

Despite Industry Challenges, Penn State Doubles Down On Nuclear Energy Program Kerri Smalec said a superhero movie

helped inspire her career choice. While watching "Iron Man," she began thinking of what she wanted to do. "I'm going to become a nuclear engineer," she said with a laugh. "I'm going to make an Iron Man suit." A 22-year-old from Delaware County, she's about to graduate in May with a nuclear engineering degree from Penn State University. She already has a position at Peach Bottom nuclear plant after she graduates. At a time when the nuclear industry faces strong headwinds, plenty of students at Penn State - and across the country - are showing an interest in nuclear engineering. Penn State is doubling down on nuclear energy. A generous gift is spurring a major expansion of the nuclear engineering program, Penn State University Eric Barron said. (The university said the donors don't want the size of the gift disclosed.) "So many programs have collapsed across the country," Barron said. "You have a few strong programs left, of which Penn State is one." ...

When Will Hummingbirds Return To Pennsylvania? Ruby-throated hummingbirds are flooding into the southeastern U.S., making their annual springtime migration back to their breeding grounds in the north, including Pennsylvania. According to Hummingbird Central, the northernmost report of a sighting of one of the tiny hummers to date was at 3 p.m. Friday, March 22, in Richmond, Virginia. Nearby, but just a bit to the south, reports came on the same day from Chesapeake and Virginia Beach, Virginia. The southern state line of Pennsylvania is about 150 miles north of Richmond, and migrating hummers can fly as much as 23 miles per day. The means Pennsylvania could be within a week's flight for the northernmost rubythroats at this point...

LANCASTER NEWSPAPERS

Hellam Township supervisors will hear proposal on preservation of riparian buffers Streams in Hellam Township will get renewed protection against erosion and sediment runoff under a proposed new ordinance to preserve riparian buffers in the township. The new law, which is expected to be considered next month by the township's supervisors, will require a 75-foot buffer of vegetation to be preserved or restored for new development or activity that results in a disturbance of the land near streams. The measure calls for the buffer area to be divided into two 37.5-foot-wide zones. The zone immediately adjacent to a stream would be fully protected, with the second zone restricting any grading, fill or other disturbance to no more than 20 percent of that zone. Exceptions in both zones would allow conditional use exceptions to be granted for docks, boat launches, and water and sewer utility purposes. Any areas in the buffer zones that are disturbed by adjacent development will need to be restored, with native trees and shrubs required in the area closest to the stream. Native grasses would also be permitted in the second zone...

34,000 trout ready to be caught in 24 streams Saturday as season opens in Lancaster County

Wrightsville Council Using Grant To Enhance Stormwater Drainage Wrightsville Borough will use a \$37,250 Green Alley grant from the York County Conservation District to rebuild 650 feet of Limekiln Alley and install environmentally friendly drainage. Borough Council Vice President Michael Gromling, who is also the borough's roadmaster, said Wrightsville was the first York County community to receive the grant in June 2017. The borough rejected original bids last fall after they all came in over \$80,000. At its March 18 meeting, council voted unanimously to accept a new bid from Carbaugh Concrete in Glen Rock for \$42,017.80 for just the project's concrete. The borough will use its own crew for excavation to save money, but it will still pay nearly \$6,000 for engineering, Gromling said...

Whenever TMI Nuclear Plant Closes, It Won't Disappear For A Long Time The 40th anniversary of the nuclear industry-changing accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant arrives Thursday amid the very real possibility that the plant has only months left to operate. But whether owner Exelon pulls the plug on the financially troubled Unit 1 reactor in September, or receives a bailout from the state Legislature and ratepayers and continues on until its license expires in another 15 years, the landmark won't disappear overnight. Sure, if the plant shutters, the familiar white plumes of water vapor will no longer be visible on the western horizon as Lancaster County commuters motor to work in Harrisburg on Route 283. The emergency sirens in northwestern parts of the county may no longer wail every six months for tests...

Ad Crable, Outdoor, Environmental Writer For LancasterOnline.com Is Retiring Ad Crable is a staff writer and outdoors columnist who covers agriculture, land use, the environment and nuclear energy. He can be reached at acrabl@lnpnews.com or (717) 481-6029. You can also follow [@AdCrableLNP](https://twitter.com/AdCrableLNP) on Twitter.

WASHINGTON OBSERVER-REPORTER

State Department of Health investigating potential cancer cluster in Washington County The Pennsylvania Department of Health is looking into a possible cluster of cancer cases in Washington County. In the past 10 years, four people within Canon-McMillan School District have been diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called Ewing's sarcoma. Each year, fewer than 200 cases of Ewing's sarcoma are diagnosed in the United States. Nate Wardle, press secretary for the Department of Health, said the department is reviewing cancer statistics for Washington County and Canon-McMillan School District. The Department of Health is using data from the Pennsylvania cancer registry to review cancer incidence in Washington County and Canon-McMillan and, using a protocol the department has in place, will determine if the number of cancer cases in the area is elevated compared to incidences for the same type of cancer in the rest of the state. Wardle said the department has received calls from members of the community who are worried about cancer risks to children in the area. Residents want to know if the cancer is coincidental or due to other factors, such as environmental issues. "We are looking into all cancers, which specifically includes radiation-type cancers by type, childhood cancer and the Ewing's family of sarcomas in Washington County and the Canon-McMillan School District," Wardle wrote in an email. "Some of those who contacted us mentioned historic radiation sources in the area, and this prompted us to analyze the radiation-related cancers, in addition to the Ewing's family and childhood cancer in general." Canonsburg was home to Standard Chemical Co., which operated the site as a radium extraction plant from 1911 to 1922, and later Vitro Corp. of America, processed ore to extract radium and uranium salts until 1957. More than 200,000 dry tons of uranium mill tailings and other contaminated materials were buried in a clay-lined encapsulation cell. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection monitors the site. The Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project, a nonprofit public health organization whose purpose is to support people who believe their health has been, or could be, impacted by oil and gas development, said it is studying the cancer cases in the Canonsburg area. The organization is calling for the Department of Health and the state Department of Environmental Protection to take a closer look at the occurrences of Ewing's sarcoma. The cause of Ewing's sarcoma, which is more common in teens and young adults, is unknown. The Marcellus Shale Coalition notes that, according to the American Cancer Society, there are at this time no known lifestyle-related or environmental causes of Ewing tumors. The Department of Health's cancer registry data dates to 1985, and the department is using all of the available data and dividing it into time periods for the evaluation. Wardle said the Health Department should have results within a month.

WILKES-BARRE CITIZENS VOICE

AG's office can proceed with lawsuit against gas drillers The state Attorney General's office can proceed with a lawsuit filed on behalf of landowners it alleges were cheated out of royalties by two natural gas drillers, a state appeals court ruled. In a 6-1 ruling, the state Commonwealth Court upheld a judge's ruling that denied motions filed by Chesapeake Energy Inc. and Anadarko Petroleum Corp. that sought to dismiss the case. The court did dismiss one of two counts that sought damages for violations of antitrust laws. The lawsuit, filed in Bradford County Court in 2015, alleges Chesapeake and Anadarko violated Pennsylvania's Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law by engaging in various unlawful conduct, including misrepresenting how much money landowners would receive for allowing the companies to extract natural gas beneath their properties through Marcellus Shale drilling. The suit also alleges the companies violated antitrust laws by agreeing not to compete against each other, which reduced competition and allowed them to keep royalty payments artificially low. The attorney general's office was prompted to act after receiving complaints from landowners who say the companies improperly deducted post-production costs from their royalty checks. The fees were so high that landowners sometimes received nothing. Attorneys for Chesapeake and Anadarko argued the unfair trade practices claim should be dismissed because the law protects only consumers who purchase goods. The landowners in essence sell the natural gas extracted from their properties to the companies, therefore the law does not apply to firms, they said. Bradford County Senior Judge Kenneth D. Brown rejected the claims in 2017, finding that the law protects any type of trade or commerce, not just the purchase of goods. The majority of the Commonwealth Court affirmed the ruling, finding that lease agreements fall under the trade and commerce protections of the unfair trade practices law...

Luzerne Lyme Disease Group Plans May 6 Meeting On Ticks In PA The state Department of Environmental Resources has begun a tick surveillance program in all 67 counties of the commonwealth. Michele Cassetori, vice president for education and outreach in the Pennsylvania Lyme Resource Network, lauded the project, made possible by funding included in the new state budget. "DEP will be collecting and testing ticks...this is a good first step and I am hoping to see more followup from the PA Task Force recommendations made in 2015," Cassetori said. The NEPA Lyme Support Group

headed by Cassetori will host a program, "A Talk About Ticks in PA," at 6 p.m. May 7 at Insalaco Hall, Room 218, Misericordia University. Guest speaker will be Samantha Pelletier, laboratory manager of the PA Tick Research Lab, East Stroudsburg University. She oversees the tick testing process, including tick identification, testing and result reporting. Pelletier is a 2017 graduate of ESU and has conducted research in identification of tick-borne diseases in ticks and wildlife hosts. She is an outdoor enthusiast and knowledgeable on tick bite prevention and safety. Pennsylvania is first in the nation in Lyme disease with more 11,000 new cases in 2017. Ticks are found in wooded areas, but backyards and playgrounds as well. Chances of being bitten by a tick are highest during nymph tick season (young deer ticks) which is May-August. Cassetori said the May 7 program "is a great opportunity to get informed about ticks, the risk of tick bites in and prevention strategies." NEPA Lyme Support Group meetings are free and open to the public. May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month. Cassetori asked the Luzerne County Council to proclaim May as Lyme Disease Awareness Month and council agreed...

Answering More Questions On Controversial Stormwater Fee In Luzerne County The stormwater program organized by the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority is well underway. Ratepayers' first bills are back. They will pay for work across 32 communities to meet pollution reduction standards imposed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for municipalities with municipal separate storm sewer system permits. Planning for more projects that will meet those mandates is ongoing. Readers still have questions, and they've written to The Citizens' Voice about the program. Here are more questions and answers: ...

YORK DAILY RECORD

Three Mile Island Accident Scared The Hell Out Of People YORK, Pa. — It was about 8 a.m. on a Wednesday, and Lou Braasch, program director of WKBO radio in Harrisburg, was holding down the morning DJ slot under his on-air name, Dan Steele. The two-way radio, linking the studio with its traffic reporter, crackled. The station's chief traffic reporter, Dave Edwards, told Braasch something was happening at Three Mile Island. There had been no official notification, no public alarm. One of Edwards' traffic watchers had noticed some activity around the nuclear power plant, just a few miles away, near Middletown, and had heard some chatter on the police scanner. Braasch connected Edwards with Mike Pintek, the station's news director. Pintek said he'd check it out. He looked up a phone number for Metropolitan Edison at Three Mile Island and dialed. (Met-Ed owned and operated the plant then.) The number turned out to be the direct line into the control room for TMI's unit 2 reactor. The man who answered the phone told Pintek, "I can't talk right now; we got stuff going on." They did. Pintek was transferred to other people. He explained that the station was going to go on the air with the story. He was told that "everything was under control." It wasn't...

PA ENVIRONMENT DIGEST BLOG (By PA DEP)

PA Chesapeake Bay Watershed Planning Steering Committee Workgroup Estimates Funding Gap Of \$1.467 Billion Over Next 6 Years The Funding Workgroup of the PA Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan Steering Committee estimated an annual funding gap of \$244.5 million over at least the next 6 years totaling \$1.467 billion to implement practices needed to meet Pennsylvania's Bay cleanup obligations. If Pennsylvania continued with its existing programs and resources, it would miss the 2025 nitrogen reduction goal by at least 19 years (2044). In contrast, with existing programs, Pennsylvania should meet its phosphorus reduction goal by 2025. The Chesapeake Bay Program and DEP presented estimates it would cost about \$459.6 million annually for the next 6 years to achieve the nitrogen and phosphorus reductions recommended by the Agriculture (\$313.1 million), Stormwater (\$78.5 million) and Forestry (\$67.7 million) workgroups considering capital, maintenance and operating costs over the life of the best management practices recommended. The Funding Workgroup said agency implementation of the Bay Watershed Plan for the state and counties will result in needing an additional 188 people at an annual cost of \$14.1 million...

Op-Ed: Will Our Dirt Roads Again Be Used As Dumping Sites For Oil & Gas Well Wastewater? The oil and gas industry in Pennsylvania produces hundreds of millions of gallons of unusable wastewater and production fluids annually. This figure may be low. Recently released findings from Duke University state water usage [nationwide] per drilled well may have been underestimated by 770 percent. Correspondingly, unusable brine fluids may have been underestimated by 1,440 percent.

Duke University states if drilling picks up, these numbers could multiply 50 times over. Pennsylvania's oil and gas industry used the state's dirt roads as a dump site for their wastewater until 2018. Dirt roads were being inundated with

brine. My township was among those that had allowed catastrophic over-brining. In 2017, it became necessary to pursue legal action to get it stopped. The PaDEP [Department of Environmental Protection] initiated a surprise, but welcome statewide ban on the road spreading of oil and gas wastewater about halfway through legal action (Environmental Hearing Board 2017-051-B)...

PA Projects Receive Over \$1.7 Million In Federal Delaware River Watershed Restoration Grants On March 22, the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed announced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation jointly awarded the first round of 25 Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund grants totaling \$4,140,000 in federal funds. This is the first time that dedicated federal funding has been allocated to on-the-ground projects that conserve and restore the Delaware River Basin. Applications are now being accepted for the 2019 round of Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund Grants. [Click here for more.](#) ...

Westmoreland Conservation District To Receive Governor's Environmental Excellence Award The Westmoreland Conservation District has been selected as one of 18 statewide recipients of the 2019 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence in Pennsylvania. The District is receiving the award for a two-part educational video it produced about stormwater basins. Stormwater basins are one of the unsung heroes of our communities. They preventing problems such as erosion and flooding by collecting water runoff from residential housing plans, commercial sites, and other developments, and then slowly releasing it...

Growing Greener Coalition Issues Call To Action To Make New Investments In Restoring The Environment, Oppose Backsliding On March 22, the Growing Greener Coalition issued a call to action to the public to urge members of the Senate and House and Gov. Wolf to make new investments in restoring the environment and preventing flooding and not to back away from funding commitments they have already made...

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Pa.)

AP: Hunters, Hikers Debate Proposed Hunting Season Changes PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Guttled deer often hang from the porch of Karen Parsons' bed-and-breakfast each fall, and those carcasses, she said, are good for business. Parsons' Fishing Creek Lodge in Columbia County sits between two of Pennsylvania's largest state game lands tracts, and each hunting season, her five rooms are often filled with hunters looking to ply those 95,514 acres for whitetail deer. No hunting day is busier in Pennsylvania than the Monday after Thanksgiving, the traditional opening day of rifle season in the state since 1963. "I have breakfast ready for those fellas at 4:30 a.m. on Monday and Tuesday," she said behind the counter of the deli in the general store. "They want to be out and in the woods early." But next month, the Pennsylvania Game Commission plans to vote on whether to move the opening day to the Saturday before Thanksgiving in an effort to draw more hunters. The state's hunting-license sales peaked in 1982 at 1.1 million, and the number has gone down, consistently, ever since. Pennsylvania sold just under 900,000 licenses last year. The cost of a license varies by age, but for most adult residents, the price is \$20.90. Travis Lau, a Game Commission spokesperson, said the agency has heard concerns from hunters who say they can no longer get off work on opening day. While many schools in rural areas are closed on opening day of hunting, Lau said that trend is shrinking. "The goal is to get more people in the woods," he said. If the Game Commission approves the change, Parsons believes her business could be a wash, gaining Friday and Saturday rentals while losing some on Monday and Tuesday. With no deer hunting allowed on Sundays in Pennsylvania, though, Parsons figured she'd make money from hunters sitting around the bed-and-breakfast all day, spending money on snacks and beverages and her famous "mountaineer" sandwich while they watched football and waited for Monday...

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Proposed chicken slaughterhouse in Alexandria draws questions, concerns (Friday) The row of aging warehouses in an industrial zone just off Alexandria's Duke Street seemed like a perfect spot for Abdulsalem Mused to open a halal butcher shop, where his employees could kill and prepare chickens according to Muslim rites. But the idea is ruffling the

feathers of neighbors, including the owners of three dog-related businesses, a commercial bakery owner and the patron of a dance studio a full block away. The Alexandria City Council has delayed until Tuesday a vote on whether to issue the business a special-use permit, after about a dozen residents raised objections at a March 16 meeting and the all-Democratic council could not muster the votes to either approve or deny the permit. Opponents said they are concerned about smells, traffic and general unseemliness. "Take the word halal out of it. I wouldn't care if it's a kosher slaughterhouse, an Italian slaughterhouse, a Midwestern slaughterhouse that wanted to open there," said Sandy Modell, owner of the nearby Wholistic Hound Academy. "A butcher shop is one thing. A slaughterhouse is another." ...

The Energy 202: Senate Democrats look for unity on eve of Green New Deal vote (Friday) Faced with the choice of voting up or down on their Green New Deal, Democrats look like they're going to rally around a third option. Originally presented as a nonbinding resolution, the ambitious outline for addressing climate change has galvanized Washington. A half-dozen presidential candidates have co-sponsored the Green New Deal resolution introduced in February to cement their pro-environment bona fides. And almost immediately, numerous Republicans have spoken against what they see as its enormous costs. Now with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) scheduling a vote on the resolution next week to put senators on the record, Democrats are trying to avoid an intraparty fight. According to two Democratic aides, top Senate Democrats are weighing a strategy of voting "present" on what climate activists and Senate Democrats are dubbing a "sham" vote. Even the lead Senate sponsor of the Green New Deal resolution, Sen. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), has indicated he will vote present after accusing McConnell of trying to "short-circuit the process." "Democrats will not allow Leader McConnell and Republicans to make a mockery of the debate in the Senate on climate change," Markey said in a statement. "This vote is a sham and little more than a political ploy to protect vulnerable Republicans from having to defend their climate science denial." And the Sunrise Movement — the activist group that protested in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) office and kick-started discussions in Washington of a Green New Deal to begin with — is not pressuring Senate Democrats to vote yes...

Virginia schools have seen the light, and it's solar energy The experience of walking under thickly polluted skies on a trip to China in middle school remains vivid years later in Catherine Xiang's memory. Now 17, she has become an environmental advocate. She is troubled by sea-level rise and was dismayed by the decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accord. She belongs to her Northern Virginia high school's environmental club and plans on studying environmental engineering in college. "I didn't want the future to be like that. I wanted to keep blue skies and stars," she said. "We should pass down an intact environment to the next generation." ...

The Energy 202 Blog: Rick Perry calls expanding nuclear energy "the real" Green New Deal President Trump loves to talk about coal-fired power: Whenever he travels to West Virginia or Kentucky he boasts of bringing back "beautiful clean coal." Trump talks far less at political rallies about his administration's efforts to help the nation's nuclear energy business. Yet on Friday, the president's top energy official just announced a major \$3.7 billion boost to keep afloat the last remaining commercial nuclear reactors under construction in the United States. At a speech to nuclear power plant employees in Georgia, where the two new reactors are being built, Energy Secretary Rick Perry said the taxpayer-guaranteed financing was part of a broader "goal of making America nuclear cool again." "Ladies and gentlemen, look around you," he said at the beginning of his address. "This is the real new green deal." ...

Nature, cherry blossoms take their course, are at stage 3 of 5 before peak bloom In Washington, where the affairs of state take their often-turbulent course each day, nature takes its own course, as around the Tidal Basin, the world-famed cherry trees are slowly making their way toward the period of peak bloom. The blossoms have reached stage three of their progress toward full bloom, the National Park Service said on Saturday. "Halfway home," the Park Service said. Stage three is the third of six stages, beginning with green color in the buds on the branches of the trees, according to the listing provided on the website of the National Cherry Blossom festival. Each stage is characterized by a new development. At stage 2, florets are visible. At stage 3, according to the festival, the characteristic development is extension of the florets...

Six spots where you can enjoy the cherry blossoms — without big crowds There's a reason the Tidal Basin is the epicenter of Washington's cherry blossom madness: About 3,800 trees there, mostly of the Yoshino variety, create a shimmering, pink-cloud effect that's quite nice — if you don't mind the 999 people angling to get close to each one. Those who prefer a slightly more Zen experience can choose among an array of alternatives when peak bloom descends

(supposedly) in early April. Here are six spots around the region that deliver a quieter, less crowded cherry blossom experience.

McConnell aims to use Green New Deal to divide Democrats, but party is unifying against his show vote Senate Republicans are trying to elevate the ideas and personalities of House Democrats in a bid to divide the opposition into the rising liberal stars, the party's presidential contenders and its more mainstream lawmakers. The effort begins with a midweek vote on the Green New Deal, a loosely defined effort to combat climate change by dramatically reducing greenhouse-gas emissions coupled with job creation. Democrats have spent years proposing different versions of legislation to rein in the effects of climate change, but Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) has taken the Green New Deal and raised it to a new level with her political star power. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) believes the proposal, written by Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), embraced by several top Democratic presidential contenders but criticized by the AFL-CIO as unrealistic, would be politically divisive for a party that has made winning back Midwest battleground states a top priority for 2020...

DELAWARE

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

Volunteers needed for tree planting March 29-30, April 6 Project to restore wildlife habitat and improve water quality in inland bays. The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays will plant 5,800 seedlings this spring at Assawoman Wildlife Area in Frankford and the Sussex Landfill site in Lewes, projects that will restore wildlife habitat and improve water quality in the local Inland Bays. More than 100 volunteers are needed for each planting event. The planting at Assawoman Wildlife Area will take place Friday, March 29, and Saturday, March 30, at a site located off Double Bridges Road in Frankford, across from the Ocean Farm and Clearwater Villages communities. Then the following weekend, Saturday, April 6, a planting will occur at the Sussex County Landfill No. 3 Buffer Site in Lewes, just off Dorman Road near Lochwood. Since the time of European development, forestland on coastal Delaware has declined as agriculture increased and development began to take over. Between 1992 to 2012 alone, eastern Sussex County lost more than 14 square miles of upland forest, further intensifying the negative impacts of human influence on wildlife and water quality. These impacts include a loss of habitat for native wildlife like songbirds, deer and turkeys, as well as an increase in nutrient pollution to creeks, rivers and bays. Excess nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen can have harmful effects on commercially-important species like blue crabs and rockfish by creating dead zones, or areas that don't have enough oxygen in the water to support aquatic life. By converting agricultural land to forestland, these projects will reduce approximately 400 pounds of phosphorus and 10 pounds of nitrogen from entering local water each year. As the forests grow, the trees will store also carbon; a vital process called carbon sequestration that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and mitigates climate change...

Dewey Beach Lions donate to Center for Inland Bays The Dewey Beach Lions Club recently presented donation checks to the Center for the Inland Bays. The donations will support the clean up of Inland Bays and improvements to the James Farm Preserve.

DELAWARE PUBLIC MEDIA (NPR)

Shad project among grantees from new Delaware River conservation fund The first grants have been announced from a new fund to support conservation efforts in the Delaware River Watershed. Twenty-five projects impacting the Delaware River are being funded through the new Delaware River Watershed Conservation Fund, which was established by the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act in 2016. Only one of the grants awarded this cycle will fund a project solely in Delaware: the Brandywine Shad Conversation Project. Hunter Lott is a leader of that project, which received a \$241,000 grant from the fund. He says shad live most of their lives in saltwater, but need freshwater to spawn. The Brandywine Shad Conversation Project aims to help restore the local shad population by removing several dams in the

Brandywine River. “When they don’t have any impediments to get around, they will do what nature tells them to do,” said Lott. “They will run up the river. They will spawn. And the next year, the year after that, there will be thousands more.” A total of 4.1 million dollars was awarded this cycle to projects in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation chief conservation officer Holly Bamford says Delawareans will benefit from projects funded upstream. “Delaware, being at the end of the watershed, is going to benefit from all the projects that are taking place in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York,” said Bamford. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is accepting proposals for the next round of grants until April 11.

Controlled burn in Middletown aims to create pollinator meadow State officials burned a field in Middletown this week to create habitat for pollinators. DelDOT performed the controlled burn Wednesday on 43 acres along U.S. Route 301. The burn is meant to suppress the growth of trees and invasive plants — so a wildflower meadow can take hold. Officials hope the meadow will support pollinators, like birds and insects. “There’s all sort of invasive species that can take over a site,” said John Petersen of the Delaware Forest Service, which helped DelDOT execute the burn. “And these wildflowers wouldn’t be able to compete with the invasive species. So they really identified burning to just kind of wipe all that stuff out.” Petersen says the additional pollinator habitat will help offset the loss of Middletown’s agricultural land to development. “Middletown has experienced residential development as well as other development,” said Petersen. “And they feel that by trying to restore pollinator habitat they could maybe create something that was being lost over time with the rapid development in the area.” DelDOT wetland scientist Christie Bonniwell says the meadow will also help DelDOT offset negative impacts on wetlands and forests from the new Route 301, which opened in January. DelDOT plans to seed the meadow with native plants including spring- and summer-blooming wildflowers.

MIDDLETOWN TRANSCRIPT

Recycling program offering compost bins half off The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control’s Recycling Program within the Division of Waste & Hazardous Substances is offering compost bins that can be pre-ordered online at \$50, half the retail price of the bins. The bins must be picked up by the purchaser at any of three locations: from 8 a.m. to noon April 27 at the Blue Hen Corporate Center, 655 S. Bay Road, Dover, order by April 21; from 8 a.m. to noon May 11 at DNREC Lewes Field Facility, 901 Pilottown Road, order by May 5; and from 8 a.m. to noon June 8 at Fort Dupont State Park, at Old Battery Lane and Hall Road, order by June 2...

Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund grants announced The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed is celebrating as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation jointly announced March 22 the first round of 25 Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund grant recipients totaling \$4,140,000 in federal funds. This is the first time that dedicated federal funding has been allocated to on-the-ground projects that conserve and restore the Delaware River Basin — New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware — which provides 15 million people, including New York City and Philadelphia, with drinking water. Of the 25 Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund grantees, 15 are members of the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, including Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, which serves Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, as well as the University of Delaware Water Resources Center. Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund grants were awarded to organizations to address issues facing the watershed, such as conserving and restoring fish and wildlife habitat, improving and maintaining water quality, sustaining and enhancing water management and reducing flood damage and improving recreational opportunities and public access. Delaware received \$241,000 for one in-state project and two multi-state projects. Four multi-state projects received \$490,392. “We’re delighted that the new Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund will support bringing living shoreline technology to the freshwater urban areas of the Delaware Estuary and to work with partners such as the Philadelphia Water Department and states of Delaware and New Jersey,” said Danielle Kreeger, science director, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary. “During the funding period, we will find locations in Delaware and New Jersey where tidal, freshwater living shorelines would be effective in stabilizing stream erosion, buffering waves and flooding and promoting improved water quality using natural means. We will also work with the Philadelphia Water Department to design and implement a portion of a freshwater mussel-based living shoreline for water quality and habitat enhancement along the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia.”...

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE-MAIL

Commentary: Legislature right to wait on EPA water standards I have represented local governments in the public water supply business across West Virginia and the country for almost 30 years. My clients spend your money to provide safe and affordable public drinking water. We are not in the business of avoiding necessary and appropriate requirements. Instead, we embrace them and simply charge you more so that we can comply. That said, the West Virginia Legislature was absolutely right to defer adoption of the EPA's 2015 updated human health criteria. Some of those criteria would be significantly lower while limits for other criteria would be significantly increased. My clients objected to their adoption (both higher and lower) because the roller coaster increases and decreases in the criteria resulted primarily from the EPA revising multiple margins of safety on top of already very stringent criteria. That is not good science. Such arbitrary margins of safety go beyond any real risk any West Virginian faces. The criteria are so unnecessarily stringent and based upon such unlikely circumstances (a West Virginian drinking 2.4 liters of untreated river water a day for 70 years and that river water contains the full level of a pollutant) that my clients could not in good conscience impose costs on you and the businesses that we serve to meet the new criteria. Beyond the multiple margins of safety included on top of the already stringent criteria there are further margins of safety in how these criteria are implemented. For example, wastewater utilities are assumed to discharge at maximum flows and pollutant concentrations while the receiving streams are assumed to be at drought conditions. Of course, those conditions are mutually exclusive. The controversy over the criteria is much ado about nothing. West Virginians have far greater issues and risks to be addressed than would ever be addressed by these criteria...

Charleston looks at future of recycling program after cutting free bag vouchers (Saturday) After this spring, the city of Charleston will no longer provide vouchers for clear recycling bags, but it's not abandoning its current method for recycling — for now. As of now, the city provides free clear bags for residents to leave for curbside pick up. The recyclables are then taken to Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority's recycling facility in Beckley...

Abandoned mine in Kanawha State Forest now habitat for threatened bats More than a century after the last shift of miners and final load of coal exited a hillside portal overlooking Middlelick Branch in what is now Kanawha State Forest, work has resumed at the entrance to the long-abandoned mine...

WEST VIRGINIA METRO NEWS

Gas industry pays for road repairs related to drilling, leader says CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The state's oil and gas industry gets a lot of blame for damaged secondary roads, but Anne Blankenship, the executive director of the West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association, noted the industry, by law, covers whatever problems it creates. Companies are required to work with the state Division of Highways and come up with a maintenance plan and post a substantial bond to cover the cost of repairing any damage they may cause before any work on a drilling or pipeline site can begin. It's not uncommon for those companies to actually do the work to make repairs and in some cases, they're going beyond the scope of what's required in state code. "We've gone outside of this policy to help maintain those roads," Blankenship said. "Last year alone we had three major companies spent over six and a half Million dollars in Marshall County alone in one year to help with that road maintenance." The deteriorating condition of the state's roadways is a problem not only to those who live along those roads, but to gas companies as well. Blankenship said they too need the roads to conduct business and when the roads are destroyed, it impacts their work. The industry, according to Blankenship, has already contributed to the solution through bonding and work outside the state's policy. She added companies stand ready to do more...

End is in sight for 2016 Flood disaster case management grant funding CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The leader of West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active In Disaster is confident VOAD will be able to address most of its remaining housing cases from the 2016 Flood before disaster case management grant funding runs out this June. "I am very happy with what the voluntary agencies were able to accomplish in this short period of time.

We have rehabbed, rebuilt or replaced almost 2,200 homes for families,” said Jenny Gannaway, executive director of West Virginia VOAD...

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER

Water Quality Worries Paden City Residents (Saturday) PADEN CITY — Sometimes in past years, water from faucets in Jon Stillwagner’s home in Paden City flowed brown. “It looked like someone had chronic diarrhea and left,” said Stillwagner, a 69-year-old lifelong resident of the town. “We’ve all had brown water at different stages in town.” Today, though, he’s concerned about water in Paden City for a different, less visible reason: the excess presence of the chemical tetrachloroethylene in the town’s drinking water supply. “What we want is for our water to be cleaned,” Stillwagner said. “We’re bathing with it. We’re cooking with it. We’ve been drinking it.” Paden City officials announced March 4 that the chemical, also called perchloroethylene or PCE, had a concentration of 5.5 parts per billion in the city’s drinking water supply. The maximum allowable contaminant level for the chemical set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is 5.0 ppb. Residents said they learned about the contamination through a letter from the city they received in the mail. Several expressed concern and confusion over whether the chemical might have an impact on their health. Mayor Clyde Hochstrasser, meanwhile, said the city is searching for solutions and that the contamination is not at a dangerous level. “The city is working to secure financing for the equipment we need to control the contamination,” Hochstrasser said. “We are also working on a temporary fix at this time. We will let residents know when we know more.” The city, with a population of about 2,400, found contamination at one of its four wells about six months ago, which it then shut down. Two other wells recently began showing PCE contamination, Hochstrasser said... Moving forward, the EPA taking the lead on investigation and remediation. The agency is taking water samples in Paden City to study the flow of water from the dry cleaners’ site to contaminated wells, spokesman Roy Seneca said. Solutions from the EPA and DEP to remove the contamination could include installing extraction wells or removing contaminated soil, Seneca said. In addition, the city is looking for funding to upgrade the aeration equipment its uses to reduce the presence of chemicals.

WBOY-TV CLARKSBURG

West Virginia coal is being used in an environmentally friendly way to make roofing tiles (Friday) CLARKSBURG, W.Va. - “West Virginia’s coals have given us the best performance,” said Bill Easter, CEO of Semplastics. Easter is re-imagining the traditional uses of materials like coal to make new high performance products. He is using West Virginia coal to make a new roofing tile that is lighter, more durable, and less flammable than a ceramic tile. Easter said that his idea of using coal in manufacturing does not damage the environment. “So people are concerned about carbon and sequestering the carbon and so with our process, we don’t burn the coal and the coal doesn’t burn. The carbon is sequestered so it does not impact global warming in any way,” explained Easter. Right now the research and development of the coal product is being done in Orlando, Florida but that all could change, bringing even more jobs to the Mountain State. “So you want to be next to the coal. I think West Virginia would appreciate the manufacturing jobs. There is a great opportunity so you can do things that benefit the society as well as make money. You really want to do both,” said Easter. Easter added its a win-win for the future of coal and the environment. Right now, West Virginia’s coal is making the durable, fire resistant, and super-strength roofing tile but Easter said they have just started scratching the surface when it comes to more goods made with coal. “We have been working with the Department of Energy. They have been advising us and providing support to sort of bring it from a test tube out to prototyping and we look forward to working with them to bring it to commercialization and high volume manufacturing,” added Easter. The next step is to secure Phase 2 funding to progress the development and manufacturing of the x-tile. For more information of Semplastics and the x-tile, visit www.x-tiles.com.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

More than 22 million gallons of sewage-tainted water flow into Jones Falls, Herring Run, officials say A t least 22.6 million gallons of sewage-tainted water overflowed into the Jones Falls and Herring Run after heavy rains this past week,

according to the Baltimore Department of Public Works. The overflows between Thursday night and Friday morning were reported from multiple locations, the agency said. Overflows can occur when stormwater infiltrates crack and breaks in sewer pipes. People should avoid contact with the stream waters to avoid contamination, the agency said. The public works department recently temporarily stopped issuing news releases on sewage overflows, saying a new live map had replaced the alerts. But after questions from The Baltimore Sun about the change in practice, the agency said it would issue alerts for overflows of 10,000 gallons or more.

A guide to seeing the cherry blossoms in Washington, D.C. Washington, D.C.'s cherry blossoms are expected to look their loveliest in early April, according to their stewards, the National Park Service. Here's a guide to the blossoms and the festival celebrating them. What: The National Cherry Blossom Festival, a chance to enjoy and celebrate the beauty...

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

Seismic surveying proposal in Atlantic raises Bay concerns Groups say 250-decibel blasts – 10 seconds apart for months at a time – would have a detrimental effect on whales, other marine life. The Atlantic Ocean is staring down the barrel of an air gun, and its blast could reverberate into the Chesapeake Bay. Despite outcry from coastal communities and most East Coast states, the Trump administration is moving forward with allowing five companies to perform seismic surveys offshore from Delaware Bay to central Florida. Environmental groups and many marine scientists fear that the tests' loud, repeated blasts, which are used to detect oil and gas deposits deep beneath the ocean floor, could upend an underwater ecosystem that relies on sound for communication. "The ocean is an acoustic world," said Michael Jasny, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's marine mammal protection program. "Whales, fish and many other species depend on sound to survive. The extensive blasting that the Trump administration has authorized would undermine marine life on an enormous scale." ... Nine state attorneys general quickly moved to throw their legal weight behind the environmental groups' lawsuit aimed at stopping the surveys before they start. The intervening states include four in the Bay watershed: Delaware, Maryland, New York and Virginia. The suit argues that the National Marine Fisheries Service violated several laws, including the Endangered Species Act, when it issued the permits. Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh said he decided to intervene because the tests could lead to drilling off the state's coast, which he sees as a potential disaster-in-waiting for its \$116 million seafood industry and \$2.6 billion ocean-based tourism industry. "Most of the water in the Bay comes from the ocean. It doesn't flush quickly. Even the normal kinds of spillage that is attendant to offshore drilling could have serious adverse consequences for the Bay," he said...

MARYLAND REPORTER.COM

Rural legislators lose fight on pesticide ban Rural delegates fought a losing battle on the House floor Thursday against banning a pesticide that has been linked to autism, ADHD and childhood cancers. Lawmakers from the state's rural areas said banning the commonly-used pesticide would be a blow to farmers who rely on it to grow their crops and put them at a competitive disadvantage. HB275, sponsored by Del. Dana Stein, D-Baltimore Co., and its companion bill in the Senate, SB270, prohibit the use of chlorpyrifos (chlor-pyr.-i-fos), insecticides that contains it, or seeds that have been treated with chlorpyrifos beginning January 1, 2020, or later with a waiver from the Maryland Department of Agriculture for its use until December 31, 2022. Similar bills came before the legislature in 2018 but died in committee. The amendment establishing waivers would allow the agriculture department to grant them if it is determined no other alternative exists. The House rejected an amendment that a rural lawmaker said could diminish some of the hardship a ban would place on farmers, especially sweet corn growers. Del. Jeff Ghrist, R-Caroline, introduced an amendment during the House floor debate that would allow farmers to continue to use seed treated with the chemical. It failed by a vote of 45 to 88. "Without this amendment, it will have a very meaningful impact on our farmers back home," he said...

VIRGINIA

WAVY-TV HAMPTON ROADS

Lawmakers seek to protect funding for Chesapeake Bay restoration (Friday) WASHINGTON, D.C. — Federal lawmakers are making a push to prevent major cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay restoration

program. President Donald Trump's 2020 budget proposal threatens to cut the program's funding by 90 percent, which legislators and environmental advocates say would threaten recent progress to improve the bay's health. "We're seeing improvements," Dr. Alison Prost said of the bay. "The dead zone's getting smaller, the bay grasses are coming back." Prost, the executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, says years of work could be put at risk if the proposed cuts take effect. "Devastating to the communities working hard," she added. "You have regulatory rollbacks to programs - fundamental clean water act programs - that help with the bay's recovery, that help with the clean air." This is not the first time Trump has sought to cut the program's funding. Congress has stepped in and restored it for the past couple of years. Funding for the bay program was \$73 million this fiscal year but the administration's proposed cuts would water that down to just \$7.3 million. "It could be catastrophic not having the federal government as part of this," Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Maryland, said. Cardin and Congressman Jamie Raskin, D-Maryland, said that while the bay's health is improving, the work is far from finished. "We're talking about the largest estuary in North America," Raskin said. "It's the lifeblood of our state." Some lawmakers are encouraged that Congress won't allow the budget cuts. They say the bay has always received support from both parties. "It's iconic in Maryland, and it's a national treasure," Cardin added. However, the Trump administration says the federal government needs to spend its money elsewhere. "There's many different regional environmental programs that we're encouraging states and localities to pick up the costs for," acting White House Budget Director Russ Vought explained. Vought said that Maryland and Virginia benefit most from the bay, so the states should foot the bill to keep it clean.

VIRGINIA MERCURY

Governor signs coal ash cleanup bill (Friday) Environmental and consumer groups applauded Gov. Ralph Northam after he signed legislation this week that aims to protect water quality by cleaning up more than 27 million cubic yards of coal ash from unlined ponds in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Northam signed into law [SB 1355](#), sponsored by Sen. Frank Wagner, R-Virginia Beach, and [HB 2786](#), sponsored by Del. Riley Ingram, R-Hopewell. The legislation seeks to clean up coal ash sites in the city of Chesapeake and in Prince William, Chesterfield and Fluvanna counties. The ash is the byproduct of coal-fired power plants operated by Dominion Energy. The law will require Dominion to move the coal ash to lined landfills or recycle it in a safe manner. "The potential risks to public health and water quality posed by unlined coal ash ponds in the commonwealth are far too great for us to continue with business as usual," Northam said. "This historic, bipartisan effort sets a standard for what we can achieve when we work together, across party lines, in the best interest of all Virginians. I am proud to sign this legislation into law."...

VIRGINIA PUBLIC RADIO

Study Shows Many Virginia Communities Suffer from Poor Air Quality Virginia's air quality has been a topic of debate in recent years, as environmentalists have clashed with business interests. Meanwhile, the quality of Virginia's air has suffered according to a new report. Virginia's air quality isn't good. In fact, it's below the national average. That's according to a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction breakdown from the County Health Rankings, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin. They show that Virginia has more fine particulate matter in the air than the rest of the country. "Break down the data and think about what's going on seasonally perhaps daily just to see what's going on and think about what are the drivers affecting your community," suggests Aliana Havrilla, an action learning coach with the collaboration. The numbers show that some areas have air quality that's way below the national average. Places like Scott County, Pittsylvania and Danville have the worst air quality. Kate Addleson at the Sierra Club of Virginia says these places are probably suffering from a combination of factors. "It very well may be there is a combination of road traffic as well as coal mining related practices as well as stationary sources like power plants." [Click here to review the data from County Health Rankings](#) She says the best things Virginia can do to clean up the air is limit sources of emissions from power plants and reduce the number of automobiles on the roads.

WILLIAMSBURG VIRGINIA GAZETTE

Environmental groups glad about coal ash cleanup law (Friday) RICHMOND — Environmental and consumer groups applauded Gov. Ralph Northam after he signed legislation this week that aims to protect water quality by cleaning up more than 27 million cubic yards of coal ash from unlined ponds in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Northam signed into law SB 1355, sponsored by Sen. Frank Wagner, R-Virginia Beach, and HB 2786, sponsored by Del. Riley Ingram, R-Hopewell. The legislation seeks to clean up coal ash sites in the city of Chesapeake and in Prince William, Chesterfield and Fluvanna counties. The ash is the byproduct of coal-fired power plants operated by Dominion Energy. The law will

require Dominion to move the coal ash to lined landfills or recycling it in a safe manner. It will also require the closure and removal of any coal combustion residuals units, including coal ash ponds or landfills, within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. "The potential risks to public health and water quality posed by unlined coal ash ponds in the commonwealth are far too great for us to continue with business as usual," Northam said. "This historic, bipartisan effort sets a standard for what we can achieve when we work together, across party lines, in the best interest of all Virginians. I am proud to sign this legislation into law." Ingram echoed those sentiments. "I was pleased to see that the General Assembly, the governor, House, Senate and Dominion were able to all come together and come up with a great solution for the coal ash ponds and in my opinion for the betterment of everyone," Ingram said. The bills were co-sponsored by several lawmakers, including Sen. Scott Surovell, D-Fairfax, and Del. Jennifer Carroll Foy, D-Prince William. They contributed key components, including a ban on "cap in place" closure of unlined ponds — a method critics said could lead to water pollution. Another component is a requirement that at least 25 percent of the coal ash be recycled for concrete or other beneficial uses. "I think this represents the first time Virginia has adopted environmental regulations that are more protective of the environment than federal law," Surovell said. "This represents an important step forward for environmental protections in Virginia." ...

MISCELLANEOUS

GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE

Senate GOP Proposes Drastic Budget Cuts, Retirement Contribution Hikes in 2020 Budget (Friday) Federal agencies would see drastically reduced spending levels and their employees would see smaller paychecks thanks to higher retirement pension contributions under a fiscal 2020 budget proposal put forward by Senate Republicans on Friday. The proposal, unveiled by Senate Budget Committee Chairman Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., would slash discretionary spending at non-defense agencies by 9 percent next fiscal year. The \$55 billion reduction would bring spending in line with statutory caps established by the 2011 Budget Control Act and exceed the 5 percent cuts proposed by President Trump in his fiscal 2020 blueprint. Senate Republicans would allow for an adjustment to those caps, however, as Congress has elected to do for the last six years through three bipartisan budget deals. The resolution would create a "reserve fund" to raise the spending caps, provided lawmakers find ways to offset the increase over a 10-year period. Enzi would then be able to raise the allocations provided to each funding category...

Relocations, Buyouts Tucked Into Trump's Budget In a surprise move, the White House, in its latest budget blueprint, proposed most major agencies grow their workforces. The suggested staffing increases marked a dramatic shift after President Trump in his first two budgets called on agencies across government slash their rolls. The increases were not across the board, however. Some agencies will still have to make downward adjustments. In those cases, the administration budgeted for buyout payments, relocation incentives and other workforce reshaping initiatives... The **Environmental Protection Agency** once again requested funds for "workforce reshaping," asking for \$31 million as part of its effort to slash 15 percent of its workforce. Congress provided no money for such efforts in fiscal years 2018 and 2019, though the agency did offer buyouts and early retirements in 2017. EPA said it would again offer those incentives in 2020, as well as relocation offers. "To help achieve its mission, EPA will develop, review and analyze mission requirements and implement options to effectively align and redistribute the agency's workforce based on program priorities, resource reallocation, and technological advances," it wrote in its budget proposal. "Effective workforce reshaping is critical to EPA's ability to accomplish its mission. EPA will be examining our statutory functions and processes to eliminate inefficiencies and streamline our processes."...

TIME MAGAZINE

How the Green New Deal Is Forcing Politicians to Finally Address Climate Change (March 21) When a group of more than 20 protesters showed up in the halls of the U.S. Senate on a recent February day, they would have been forgiven for expecting a chilly reception. For the past seven months, sit-ins at a range of offices—from California Governor Jerry Brown's to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's—had followed a similar pattern: show up, sing songs, get led away in

handcuffs for disrupting the peace. But on that particular Wednesday, things were different. Instead of being dismissed or arrested, this band of environmental activists from a group known as the Sunrise Movement was warmly welcomed. Democratic Senators' aides applauded their songs, led them to back offices for meetings and cheered their efforts. "It starts with what you're doing, from the bottom on up," Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders told them. "I just want to thank you." In the weeks that followed, Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer, after years of near radio silence on climate change, gave a series of speeches on the chamber floor. "For the first time in a long time, the Senate is finally debating the issue of climate change, and if you ask me, it's about time," he said. "Climate change is an urgent crisis and an existential threat." It's not just Democrats who suddenly want to focus on climate change. President Trump seized the opportunity to double down on his denial of climate science, while other Republicans began recalibrating their messaging. Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz, an ardent defender of the President who introduced a bill in 2017 to eliminate the EPA, responded to Trump by tweeting, "Climate change is real." In December, John Cornyn of Texas, who until recently served in GOP Senate leadership, tweeted positively about a tax on carbon emissions, and a month later, Republican Representative Francis Rooney of Florida and Democratic colleagues joined to introduce a carbon-tax measure in the House...

BLOOMBERG ENVIRONMENT

Flint Water Woes Spur States to Act on Lead as EPA Struggles The EPA has been struggling to update its regulations on lead in drinking water for nearly a decade now, pushing back its self-imposed deadlines to unveil new policies nearly a dozen times. Many states have stepped into this regulatory lurch and have pursued or enacted their own policies—everything from launching inventories of lead pipe locations to mandating lead pipe replacement. But there are some lead regulations that states simply don't have the resources, expertise, or legal authority to pursue, water industry officials and observers say. "States can take on this issue. They can do a lot and we're already seeing it," Tom Neltner, a food safety researcher who served as an adviser to the Environmental Protection Agency on lead issues, said. "But the reality is, we need a national solution."...

EPA Releases Previously Private Health Data on Pigment (Friday) Previously confidential details on the health effects associated with exposure to a paint pigment were released by the EPA March 22 following pressure from Democratic legislators and environmental health advocacy groups. The release did not change the Environmental Protection Agency's conclusions about pigment violet 29, which found that it presents no undue concern. But the issue goes to the heart of the nation's primary chemicals law: how to balance company claims of confidentiality for trade secrets versus the public's right to know safety decisions. Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-N.J.), chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Rep. Paul D. Tonko (D-N.Y.), chairman of that committee's Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change, have repeatedly said the EPA violated the law by refusing to make health and safety data public, as required by the 2016 amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act. The legislators repeated those demands in a March 21 letter to EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler...

GREENWIRE / E&E NEWS

Air Pollution: EPA proposes New Source Review accounting change (Friday) EPA, after an ad hoc attempt to rework one facet of the New Source Review permitting program quickly ran into a lawsuit last year, now appears to be pursuing the same objective through a formal rulemaking. Yesterday, the agency advanced a proposed rule on the theme of "project emissions accounting" to the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs for a standard review, according to a government website. According to an accompanying synopsis, the proposal would condense the process for predicting emissions increases from a plant expansion or other significant changes at factories and other industrial pollution sources. Those forecasts are critical to gauging whether such changes amount to a "major modification" that would warrant a New Source Review pre-construction permit accompanied by pollution control requirements. While EPA has not released the text of the proposed rule, then-Administrator Scott Pruitt similarly sought to compress the forecasting process in a memo issued last March. Under a two-step process used up to then, companies had to first calculate whether a particular project would lead to a significant emissions increase. The second step then entailed determining whether the project would still lead to a noteworthy pollution boost, once emissions increases or decreases related to other factors were accounted for. Pruitt's memo allowed firms to consider both potential pollution increases and decreases at that first step...

Could PFAS concerns sway the Democratic presidential contest? (Friday) The plight of communities with PFAS

contamination in their drinking water is getting an attention boost from the 2020 presidential campaign. Democrats in the crowded field of more than a dozen candidates are calling for more action to clean up per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance pollution, a key concern in some areas of New Hampshire, which holds the first primary of the campaign season. PFAS is providing a platform for hopefuls to slam President Trump's environmental agenda as they make their case to voters about who is the best person to take on Trump next year. And while New Hampshire, whose primary comes just after the Iowa caucuses, isn't the only state to suffer from PFAS issues, it's helping candidates connect more closely with voters in the Granite State...

Green groups sue EPA over lack of spill regs (Friday) The Natural Resources Defense Council and other environmental groups sued EPA yesterday over its failure to issue regulations on chemical facilities' plans for spills of hazardous substances. In 1990, the amended Clean Water Act required EPA to issue regulations by August 1992 that would force the most dangerous chemical facilities to plan for worst-case scenario spills of hazardous substances and work to prevent those spills from happening, the complaint states, and EPA hasn't yet issued those regulations. Chemical facility workers and the people who live closest to these facilities face the highest risk, with communities that are mostly low-income and made up of people of color bearing a disproportionate burden, the suit states. "For over 25 years, EPA has abdicated its responsibility under the law to protect communities that live near aboveground storage tanks brimming with harmful chemicals. These communities live with the constant risk of experiencing catastrophic, toxic chemical spills in their own backyards. This lawsuit seeks to put critical protections in place once and for all," NRDC attorney Kaitlin Morrison said in a statement. The complaint cites spills of chemicals such as benzene and butadiene during Hurricane Harvey that led to hospitalization of emergency responders as examples of the need to prevent and address these types of incidents. EPA spokeswoman Maggie Sauerhage said the agency doesn't comment on pending litigation.

EPA: Judge tosses challenge to advisory panel membership policy (Friday) For the second time this year, a federal judge has squelched a legal challenge to EPA's contentious membership policy for its scientific advisory committees...

30 years later, Exxon Valdez's legacy still gushes (Friday) Valdez, Alaska, Mayor John Devens' insistently ringing telephone awoke him at 6 a.m. on March 24, 1989. The urgent caller was a man named Dave, the manager of the public radio station serving the small town of about 4,000 residents. "Dave informed me it was time to put my mayor's hat on, because we had a big oil spill," Devens recounted to inquiring House members several weeks later. He didn't know the half of it. When the 987-foot-long Exxon Valdez oil tanker ran aground 30 years ago this weekend on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound, it released a record-setting 11 million gallons of crude oil into a uniquely vulnerable environment. Numbers can't do the damage justice, but they're a start...

NPR

For A Healthier Planet, Eat These 50 Foods, Campaign Urges Global reliance on just a handful of crops for calories is hurting the environment — and wildlife, a new report says. It urges the world to diversify its diet to save plant and animal species alike...

What Recent Destructive Cyclones Tell Us About Climate A cyclone hit Southern Africa and a "bomb cyclone" hit Nebraska causing massive flooding. NPR's Michel Martin talks to climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe about the climate implications of these events...

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Is your disposal environmentally friendly? If you're trying to be more eco-friendly at home, should you use your kitchen garbage disposal? It depends. "Keep in mind that when food is added to the wastewater system, it must be further treated," says Maggie Sauerhage, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. She suggests learning about your local water infrastructure first. For starters, the most eco-friendly option for food waste is to create less of it. For unavoidable food waste, consider donating it or composting. Beyond that, wastewater and environment experts agree that the environmental value of kitchen disposal systems depends on the wastewater system of a given locality. Disposals make sense if your wastewater system is set up to convert food waste into energy, as is the case in a growing number of big cities. "Any food that is sent down the disposal will be filtered and captured at a wastewater treatment facility. The debris captured are typically sent off to a landfill, incinerator or to an anaerobic digestion facility (for conversion into energy) if one is close by," says Steve Dege, director of material supply chain and solutions at the

recycling company TerraCycle. Joe Dillon, president of Racine, Wisconsin-based InSinkErator, which invented the garbage disposal more than 80 years ago, says disposals are used in more than 50 percent of U.S. homes and in countless food-service operations. He argues that in addition to convenience, disposals are ecologically beneficial because they divert food waste from landfills. "Using an advanced garbage disposal like the InSinkErator can lessen the environmental impact of food waste by sending the processed food particles — from meat, bones, even banana peels — through a home's plumbing system to facilities equipped to handle them, rather than sitting in landfills and contributing to excess methane," he says. "A growing number of wastewater facilities are installing equipment that allows them to turn food waste into renewable energy. Cities that have introduced this technology include New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Milwaukee and Tacoma, Wash." ...

NEW YORK TIMES

Commentary: Owning a Car Will Soon Be as Quaint as Owning a Horse I will die before I buy another car. I don't say that because I am particularly old or sick, but because I am at the front end of one of the next major secular trends in tech. Owning a car will soon be like owning a horse — a quaint hobby, an interesting rarity and a cool thing to take out for a spin on the weekend. Before you object, let me be clear: I will drive *in* cars until I die. But the concept of actually purchasing, maintaining, insuring and garaging an automobile in the next few decades? Finished. This could be the most important shift since the Cambrian explosion of the smartphone. Car-sharing continues to increase (Uber and Lyft are set to go public this year), new innovations emerge all the time (Scooters! Vertical-take-off-and-landing vehicles!) and all manner of autonomous technologies are inevitable (Elon Musk, whatever you think of him or the prospects of Tesla, is 100 percent directionally correct). Private car ownership declined globally last year, and it is a trend that I believe is going to accelerate faster than people think...

Copenhagen Wants to Show How Cities Can Fight Climate Change The Danish capital wants to be carbon neutral six years from now. Its plan involves wind, recycling and a very innovative ski hill...

SIERRA MAGAZINE

Is the EPA Helping to Poison Bees? The EPA has been allowing growers to spray pesticides that are toxic to honeybees and other pollinators using a loophole that bypasses standard environmental review and public comment, according to a report by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), an environmental legal advocacy group. The CBD analyzed EPA records and found 78 instances since 2012 when the agency permitted sulfoxaflor, a compound that the EPA's own research found highly toxic to pollinators, to be used on crops spanning an area of over 17.5 million acres in 18 states. The EPA justified this, says the CBD, by using a loophole in its own regulations that allows for "emergency exemptions" in cases involving "an urgent, nonroutine situation that requires the use of a pesticide(s)." Sulfoxaflor was initially developed by Dow Chemical in 2010 and was marketed as a safer alternative to neonicotinoids, a widely used class of pesticide. Neonicotinoids had become a prime suspect in colony collapse disorder, to the point where they had been banned in some countries for their toxicity to honeybees. Sulfoxaflor was approved by the EPA in 2013, but in 2015, the 9th Circuit Court reversed that approval after a lawsuit brought by the American Beekeeping Association and other bee-related organizations argued that the approval was made using flawed and limited data, and that sulfoxaflor showed signs of being dangerous to bees. Dow was allowed to amend its application for approval, which it did. The new application said, among other things, that sulfoxaflor could be applied while crops weren't in bloom to avoid pollinators, and only while wind speed was sufficiently low to keep the pesticide from drifting into areas foraged by bees. In 2016, the EPA approved its use under those circumstances...